

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming apparatus comprising:

a forming unit to which electric power is supplied from a power supply unit, and which forms an image onto a recording medium on the basis of acquired image information;

a fixing unit at which electric power is supplied from the power supply unit to a heater thereof, and the formed image is fixed by heating the recording medium on which the image has been formed;

a detecting unit which detects an electric power consumption of the forming unit and an electric power consumption of the fixing unit; and

a control unit which controls the power supply unit so as to increase the electric power consumption of the fixing unit when the electric power consumption of the forming unit detected by the detecting unit is less than or equal to a predetermined amount.

2. An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the control unit determines surplus electric energy by subtracting the electric power consumption of the forming unit and the electric power consumption of the fixing unit from available electric energy of the image forming apparatus, and controls so as to increase the electric power consumption of the fixing unit within a range of the surplus electric energy.

3. An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the control unit, at the time of increasing the electric power consumption of the fixing unit on the basis of the electric power consumption of the forming unit detected by the detecting unit,  
5 increases the electric power consumption of the fixing unit with respect to a predetermined time determined in advance.

4. An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:  
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an option unit which carries out processing different from the image forming processing; and

an option control unit which, after receiving a request for processing of the option unit, controls  
15 so as to carry out the processing of the option unit when it is determined that power supply to the forming unit and the fixing unit can be sufficiently carried out even if the processing of the option unit is carried out, and so as to carry out the processing of  
20 the option unit after the processing of the forming unit is completed when it is determined that the power supply to the forming unit and the fixing unit cannot be sufficiently carried out if the processing of the option unit is carried out.

5. An image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

an option unit which carries out processing

different from the image forming processing; and

an option control unit which, after receiving  
a request for processing of the option unit, controls  
so as to carry out the processing of the option unit  
5 when it is determined that a fixing temperature of the  
fixing unit can be maintained even if the processing of  
the option unit is carried out, and so as to carry out  
the processing of the option unit after the processing  
of the forming unit is completed when it is determined  
10 that the fixing temperature of the fixing unit cannot  
be maintained if the processing of the option unit is  
carried out.

6. An image forming apparatus according to  
claim 1, wherein the option unit includes at least  
15 one of a copying function, a FAX function, a telephone  
function, and a scanning function.

7. An image forming method comprising:  
respectively detecting an electric power  
consumption of a forming unit and an electric power  
consumption of a fixing unit of an image forming  
20 apparatus having the forming unit to which electric  
power is supplied from a power supply unit, and which  
forms an image onto a recording medium on the basis of  
acquired image information, and the fixing unit in  
25 which electric power is supplied from the power supply  
unit to a heater thereof, and the formed image is fixed  
by heating the recording medium on which the image has

been formed; and

increasing the electric power consumption of the fixing unit when the electric power consumption of the forming unit is less than or equal to a predetermined amount.

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8. An image forming method according to claim 7, wherein the controlling determines surplus electric energy by subtracting the electric power consumption of the forming unit and the electric power consumption of the fixing unit from available electric energy of the image forming apparatus, and controls so as to increase the electric power consumption of the fixing unit within a range of the surplus electric energy.

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9. An image forming method according to claim 7, wherein the controlling, at the time of increasing the electric power consumption of the fixing unit on the basis of the electric power consumption of the forming unit detected by the detecting unit, increases the electric power consumption of the fixing unit with respect to a predetermined time determined in advance.

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10. An image forming method according to claim 7, further comprising:

after receiving a request for processing of an option unit which carries out processing different from the image forming processing, controlling so as to carry out the processing of the option unit when it is determined that power supply to the forming unit and

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the fixing unit can be sufficiently carried out even if the processing of the option unit is carried out, and so as to carry out the processing of the option unit after the processing of the forming unit is completed when it is determined that the power supply to the forming unit and the fixing unit cannot be sufficiently carried out if the processing of the option unit is carried out.

11. An image forming method according to claim 7, further comprising:

after receiving a request for processing of an option unit which carries out processing different from the image forming processing, controlling so as to carry out the processing of the option unit when it is determined that a fixing temperature of the fixing unit can be maintained even if the processing of the option unit is carried out, and so as to carry out the processing of the option unit after the processing of the forming unit is completed when it is determined that the fixing temperature of the fixing unit cannot be maintained if the processing of the option unit is carried out.

12. An image forming method according to claim 7, wherein the option unit includes at least one of a copying function, a FAX function, a telephone function, and a scanning function.

13. A fixing device comprising:

a fixing unit which carries current to a heater and heats a recording medium on which an image has been formed to thereby fix the formed image;

5 a detecting unit which respectively detects an electric power consumption with respect to a processing unit to which a power supply unit supplying electric power to the fixing unit further supplies electric power, and an electric power consumption of the fixing unit; and

10 a control unit which controls so as to increase the electric power consumption of the fixing unit when the electric power consumption of the processing unit detected by the detecting unit is less than or equal to a predetermined amount.

15 14. A fixing device according to claim 13, wherein the control unit determines surplus electric energy by subtracting the electric power consumption of the processing unit and the electric power consumption of the fixing unit from available electric energy of  
20 the power supply unit, and controls so as to increase the electric power consumption of the fixing unit within a range of the surplus electric energy.

25 15. A fixing device according to claim 13, wherein, the control unit, at the time of increasing the electric power consumption of the fixing unit on the basis of the electric power consumption of the processing unit detected by the detecting unit,

increases the electric power consumption of the fixing unit with respect to a predetermined time determined in advance.